The Founding of The Lane Seminary

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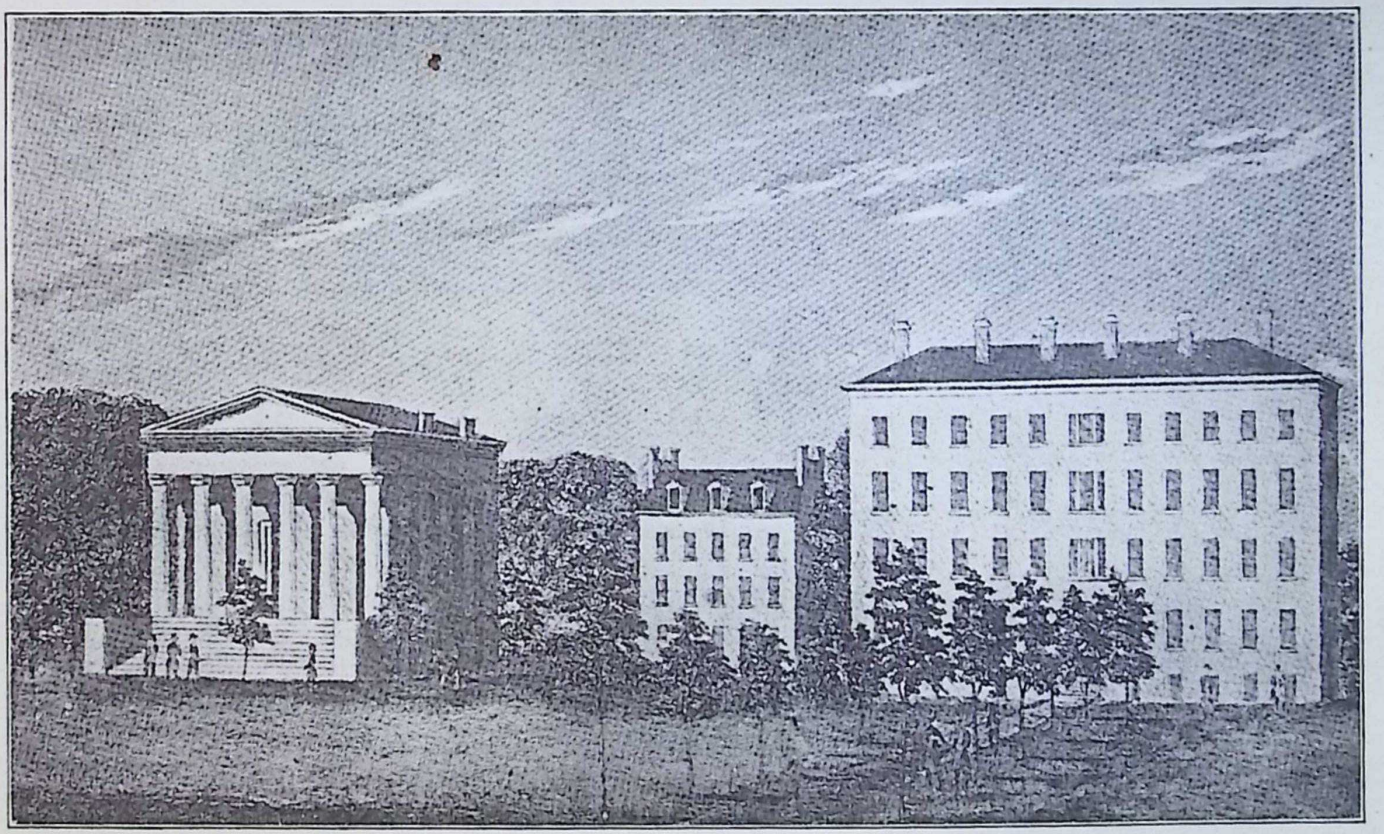

THE HOME OF THE LANE SEMINARY, 1832-1880

THE HOME OF THE LANE SEMINARY, 1880-1932

THE FOUNDING
OF
THE LANE SEMINARY

BY

JOHN VANT STEPHENS

For twenty-two years a member of
The Lane Seminary Faculty

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One Hundred and Fifty
Years of Presbyterianism
in the Ohio Valley

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THE FOUNDING OF THE LANE SEMINARY*

JOHN VANT STEPHENS

In 1787 the Continental Congress passed the Ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory. William Henry Elson states that this Ordinance "has been rightfully pronounced next in importance to the Declaration of Independence and the federal Constitution in its results for the United States." The Northwest Territory was bounded on the east by Pennsylvania, on the south by the Ohio River, on the west by the Mississippi River and on the north by the Great Lakes. Out of this Territory were carved the states of Ohio (1803), Indiana (1816), Illinois (1818), Michigan (1837), Wisconsin (1848), and part of Minnesota (1858).

The Ordinance provided that slavery should be prohibited; that religious freedom should be maintained; that habeas corpus and trial by jury should be recognized. These political provisions, especially that against slavery, drew many immigrants to the Territory.

But even before the passage of the Ordinance portions of the Territory lying along the Ohio River had been surveyed. On April 7, 1788, a small colony reached the mouth of the Muskingum, and encamped on the spot where Marietta now stands. Of these people General Washington said: "No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property, and

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* This account of the Founding of The Lane Seminary, with a few exceptions, is limited to the administration of its first President, the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, 1832-1850. The charter name of the Institution is "The Lane Seminary." The word "theological" does not appear in the official title, though it is generally referred to as "The Lane Theological Seminary." The author was connected with the Lane Faculty the last twenty-two years of its existence, 1910-1932. Of the thirty-three members of the Faculty from first to last only four served a longer period than he.

strength will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally; and there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community."

The first settlement at Losantiville, now Cincinnati, was made on December 24, 1788, the same year of the Marietta settlement. At an early date what Alfred Matthews calls a "remarkable compositeness of population" was settling in the Ohio section of the Territory.

THE KEMPERS

Among these new comers Presbyterians and Congregationalists were well represented, and early steps were taken to establish churches among them. The Rev. David Rice visited Cincinnati and organized the First Presbyterian Church in 1790. In 1791 the Rev. James Kemper began his ministry with this church, which continued until 1794. After this ministry he was engaged until 1810 in home missionary work. From 1810 until 1814 he was settled over the Flemingsburg, Kentucky, church. While pastor in Cincinnati he purchased a tract of land on Walnut Hills, on which he built a block-house, replaced in 1804 by a more modern and commodious log structure. This latter house now stands in the Zoo in Cincinnati.

Mr. Kemper's sons purchased lands adjoining and near their father's so the Kempers became large land owners on Walnut Hills. After his Flemingsburg pastorate Mr. Kemper returned to his Walnut Hills home, and supplied Duck Creek congregation, a few miles to the east, until its removal to Pleasant Ridge. In 1818 and 1819 he and his sons and their neighbors built the "stone church," size 30 x 40 feet, later replaced by a brick building, at what is now the juncture of Melrose Avenue with McMillan Street. Here he served until his death in August, 1834.

Mr. Kemper labored under a great handicap in preparing himself for the ministry. This experience together with his general interest in education led him to give special attention to the subject of schools. He was connected in one way or another with a number of academies. Just before the founding of The Lane

Seminary he was interested in the Walnut Hills Academy, located near what is now the intersection of Stanton Avenue and Oak Street, two blocks west of the entrance to the seminary campus.

THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

In view of the growth of population in the West, the General Assembly thought it advisable to establish a Seminary in the West. The two chief competitors for the location were Allegheny Town, near Pittsburgh, and Walnut Hills, a country site, near Cincinnati. The Rev. James Kemper sent a letter to the Assembly of 1827, in which he proposed to give twenty acres of land on which to locate the institution in the event it was decided to locate it at Walnut Hills. This Assembly decided in favor of Allegheny Town, so the "Western Theological Seminary" was lost to Walnut Hills, probably because Walnut Hills insisted on a literary department in connection with the Seminary and a manual labor requirement for the students.

In his History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America the Rev. Dr. E. H. Gillett states that "the Seminary at Allegheny Town promised in 1829 to be little better than a failure. The Synods of Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana had very decidedly refused to co-operate with it." "Its remoteness," he continues, "in great measure precluded co-operation."

In 1829 the Synod of Indiana established at Hanover, in connection with the Hanover Academy, "The Indiana Theological Seminary." It was removed to New Albany, Indiana, in 1840, then called "The New Albany Theological Seminary." In 1859 it was reorganized and removed to Chicago and renamed "The Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Northwest." In 1886 it was renamed "The McCormick Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church." In 1928 the name was changed to "The Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago."

A Theological Seminary at Danville, Kentucky, was opened on September 1, 1853. It was consolidated with the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., in 1901, to form the Louisville Presbyterian Theological

Seminary, a union Institution under the care of the Presbyterian Churches U. S. and U. S. A.

Walnut Hills had received favorable notice in the General Assembly as a suitable location for a Seminary. In view of the lack of co-operation of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana with the Western Theological Seminary, and in view of the pressing need felt in southwestern Ohio and adjacent territory, "the way was now open," says Dr. Gillett, "for carrying out the project of a literary and theological institution at Walnut Hills, two miles from Cincinnati."

THE LANE BROTHERS

It was no small undertaking to finance such an institution. Aid came from an unexpected source. On September 27, 1828, a group of gentlemen met in the session room of the First Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati. This group was first known as "The Ohio Board of Education," but later by charter, February 11, 1829, became the Board of Trustees of "The Lane Seminary." At this meeting, according to the records of the Trustees of The Lane Seminary, "a paper was presented exhibiting the plan of an institution recommended to be established, and containing a proposition from Messrs. E. Lane and brother, merchants of New Orleans, to pay over a certain amount of money yearly toward defraying the current expenses of such an institution should it be established."

A feeling prevailed that "the work of providing an evangelical ministry for the West must be done chiefly at the West." "It was this view," says the Rev. Dr. Edward D. Morris, for thirty years (1867-1897) a member of the Lane Faculty, "which led the brothers Lane, natives of Maine, but at the time engaged in business at New Orleans, to resolve, early in the year 1828, to set apart 'one thousand dollars per annum, for four years, and a fourth of their income thereafter,' for the founding of an institution at some point in the West, 'the primary object of which should be to educate pious young men for the gospel ministry.' The elder brother, being in the Baptist connection [the younger

brother was also a Baptist] shortly afterward came to Cincinnati for the purpose of selecting a location and starting the enterprise, primarily under the auspices of that denomination. Discovering that his plan could not be carried out in that form, and learning that some preliminary steps had been taken toward the establishment of a Presbyterian Seminary at this point, he was led to make his generous proposal to those especially interested in the movement. The proposal was accepted, and in October, 1828, a Board of Trustees was organized, and the noble enterprise was fairly undertaken."

So this "plan of an institution recommended to be established" resulted in the Lane bequest of $4,000, a large sum for those days, and a gift of 60 acres of land from the Kemper family on which to locate the institution. In his "Life's Review" by the Rev. James Kemper, is an entry as follows: "The Seminary has been set on foot by two brothers by the name of Lane, commission merchants at New Orleans, and who generously guaranteed $4,000.00 toward its support, while my son made a donation of 60 acres of land on which it is erecting and which we estimate at $6,000.00. The several branches of our family are bearing some part of the above donation. I hope and pray the Lord will prosper the Lane Seminary for the advancement of vital, evangelical piety and the extension of the borders of our Western Zion. This Institution is founded on the laboring plan for the recreation of the students in farming, gardening, mechanism, etc." Later, in 1832, Mr. Elnathan Kemper gave the Seminary a permanent lease on an additional 50 acres of land, making 110 acres from the Kemper family.

It will be observed that Mr. Kemper pays a fine tribute to the Lane brothers for their generosity through means of which he says that "the Seminary has been set on foot." It is no less interesting to note the self abnegation of the Lane brothers. On January 1, 1829, a very short time before the date on which the charter was secured, "the President laid before the Board [of Trustees] a letter addressed to him by Mr. Ebenezer Lane containing a request that the name of 'The Lane Seminary' contemplated in the application for a charter to be given to the

proposed Institution be changed to some other name appropriate." The letter read as follows:

New Orleans, Dec. 7, 1828.

Rev. Joshua L. Wilson,

Dear Sir:

I last evening received a letter from my friend Abraham A. Halsey informing me that a bill of incorporation had been prepared for the Seminary, to be called "The Lane Seminary." The object of this letter is to thank the Trustees for the honor they have conferred upon us; and to desire them to change its present name to some other more appropriate. I feel a deep interest in this institution and hope it may meet with the blessing of God; at the same time I feel an aversion to any honor of a worldly nature, and hope this letter will arrive in time for its name to be changed before its incorporation. My brother, William A. Lane, is now absent from home, but in expressing my views and feelings on the subject, I feel assured I am expressing his.

Very respectfully your friend and Obt. Servant,

EBENEZER LANE.

THE LANE SEMINARY

Neither the Lanes nor the Kempers were seeking personal glory, but all alike were concerned in a real service for a needy people. As might have been expected, in view of preceding statements, when Lane was founded provisions were made for a literary department and a manual labor requirement. With reference to the first, Dr. Morris states that "the literary department was continued in an experimental form, and under great embarrassment arising from the lack of funds and other causes, until the autumn of 1834," when the Board took action discontinuing the department.

At the time of the founding of Lane manual labor schools were popular in various parts of the country. The Rev. James Kemper was an earnest advocate of the theory. Lane's charter provided "that a fundamental rule or principle of said institu-

tion shall be that every student therein, when in good health, shall be required to spend not less than three, nor more than four hours, each day in agricultural or mechanical labor, the avails of which shall be applied towards defraying the expenses of the institution, and the board and tuition of the students."

Dr. Morris makes an observation on the manual labor schools which is worth passing on. He says: "The theory on which they were founded was exceedingly beautiful, and nothing but time and experience could prove whether the realization would correspond with the grandeur of the dream." The "grandeur of the dream" was not realized by Lane. Dr. Morris describes the efforts of the Board to carry out this charter provision: "The experiment was faithfully prosecuted, but with unfavorable results. With what devotion the Trustees clung to their original hope, their records bear effectual witness. Their numerous resolutions concerning stewards and superintendents, concerning the methods of keeping the agricultural and mechanical accounts, concerning the management and use of the farm, concerning the purchase of tools and machinery, concerning wages, concerning the clearing of forest grounds for pasturage, concerning the planting of orchards, concerning a garden, concerning the purchase and sale of milch cows, and wagons, and divers other such matters, show that like true men they stuck to their convictions until it became evident that the students, if they were not eating their own heads off, were devouring the Institution, leaf and stock." Such experiences could have but one termination. The manual labor provision, sometime after 1844, was abandoned.

FINANCE

As we have seen the Kemper family originally donated 60 acres of land on which to found the Seminary, and that this gift was further increased in 1832 by Mr. Elnathan Kemper who gave a permanent lease on 50 additional acres. As noted, the Lane brothers gave $4,000. But magnificent as these gifts were, for the times, they were not sufficient to meet the expense of the Institution. Dr. Morris states that "steps were taken, as soon as the charter was obtained, to procure an additional endowment, such

as would enable the Institution to perform the work for which it had been established. A subscription of nearly $5,000 was secured in Cincinnati and the vicinity, chiefly for the purpose of erecting suitable buildings; but all efforts to procure funds from more distant sources proved abortive. Late in 1830, when Dr. Beecher was called to his place in the Institution, a more vigorous and successful attempt was made. Upon condition of his acceptance, $20,000 were subscribed by Arthur Tappan, Esq., and a further sum of $30,000 was pledged by other friends of the enterprise at Philadelphia and New York and elsewhere. To secure these pledges about $16,000 were raised in 1832 at the West, and during the three succeeding years, the resources of the Seminary were considerably increased by further donations from persons in the East, whose hearts had been enlisted in the great work of providing an educated ministry for the valley of the Mississippi. . . . But the financial revulsion in 1837, and the succeeding years, rendered Mr. Tappan and many other subscribers unable to pay either principal or interest on their pledges, and reduced the pecuniary resources of the Seminary to the slight income from rented lands, and the interest of the scant endowment already in hand." During Dr. Beecher's administration the Seminary was hard pressed financially. The Board was frequently behind on the salaries of the professors. When Dr. Beecher retired the Board gave him a note for $3,800 on back salary. Interest was paid on this note until it was taken up, the principal and interest being paid in full. It was the 110 acres of the Kemper lands that saved the Seminary in subsequent years.

OPENED, 1832

The literary department was opened on November 18, 1829, and was closed in 1834. The Theological Seminary was opened on December 26, 1832, and was affiliated with The Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago in 1932, after having completed one hundred years of fruitful service. The Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, of Boston, after a second call, January 23, 1832, accepted the presidency of the Seminary and the Chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology, and on December 26, 1832, he was formally

inducted into office. The Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Biggs entered at the same time upon his work as Professor of Church History and Church Polity. The Rev. Dr. Calvin E. Stowe began his work in the Chair of Biblical Literature in 1833. It was he who later went to Europe and purchased a library which until the present time attracts special attention. Later other members were added to the Faculty.

The Seminary was very fortunate in the personnel and scholarship of its Faculty. Dr. Beecher was regarded as "the most prominent, popular, and powerful preacher in our nation." He was one of the greatest personalities of his time. Perhaps no other man of his day did more in the molding of a sound public opinion. He attacked dueling as a great national sin, and was the inspirational leader in having it outlawed. In his famous six sermons he largely originated the temperance reform. He broke the power of Unitarianism in Boston. He roused eastern Christians to the spiritual needs of the West. He was withal a great revivalist. Dr. Morris says that he "rendered valuable service to American Calvanism and to the theological training of the Presbyterian Church." While the other members of the Faculty were not so noted as Dr. Beecher, they were nevertheless able men. The Faculty was one of marked ability and extensive reputation. Students were drawn to Lane from Yale, Dartmouth, Williams, Amherst, Middlebury, Bowdoin, Union and other eastern colleges.

Next to Dr. Beecher, the Rev. Dr. Edward D. Morris rendered the most valuable service to Lane, and who, next to Dr. Beecher, was the most noted and versatile man ever connected with the Lane Faculty.

DR. JOSHUA L. WILSON

The Rev. Dr. Joshua L. Wilson, whom Dr. Beecher regarded as "a man of power and large capacity for leadership," in 1808 became minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, a position which he held for thirty-eight years. Dr. Wilson was the President of "The Ohio Board of Education," mentioned above, and became President of the Board of Trustees of "The

Lane Seminary," when it was chartered by the state, February 11, 1829. It was he who at first in the West exerted the greatest influence in calling Dr. Beecher to the presidency of Lane. But before Dr. Beecher arrived he resigned his membership on the Board of Trustees, "separated himself wholly from the enterprise" and turned against Dr. Beecher. This action was in strange contrast with his former attitude. Dr. Beecher was first called to the presidency of Lane on October 22, 1830. He was pastor of the Hanover Street church in Boston, whose church building had been burned. He felt constrained to remain with the church pending the erection of a new building, and so he did not accept the call.

While Dr. Wilson was engaged in a camp meeting word reached him that it was thought Dr. Beecher would accept the call. He was so overjoyed that he "clapped his hands and shouted 'Glory to God in the highest!' " But, as we shall see, this ecstatic experience gave place to a radical change, due to the mutterings of the approaching ecclesiastical storm that separated the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America into Old School and New School.

The Rev. Dr. E. H. Gillett states that the General Assembly in 1817 took exception "to certain parts of the Synod's [Philadelphia] Pastoral Letter, in which the several Presbyteries were enjoined to call to account all such ministers as were suspected of embracing 'any of the opinions usually called Hopkinsian.' " This Assembly not only did not approve this part of the Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia, but sent down to the churches a Pastoral Letter of its own, in which among other things it said: "While we hold fast the form of sound words which we have received, let us guard against indulging a spirit of controversy, than which few things are more unfriendly to the life and power of godliness. It is never necessary to sacrifice charity, in order to maintain faith and hope. That difference of opinion, acknowledged on all hands, to be of the minor class, may and ought to be tolerated, among those who are agreed in great and leading views of divine truth, is a principle on which the godly have so long and so generally acted, that it seems

unnecessary, at the present day, to seek arguments for its support. Our fathers, in early periods of the history of our Church, had their peculiarities and diversities of opinion; which yet, however, did not prevent them from loving one another, from cordially acting together; and by their united prayers and exertions, transmitting to us a goodly inheritance. Let us emulate their moderation and forbearance, and we may hope to be favored with more than their success." Had this admonition been heeded the bitter controversy and division between the Old School and the New School might have been averted. Had this counsel been followed, later troubles in the Church might have been avoided.

TWO TYPES OF THEOLOGY

"American theology," as the Rev. Dr. A. H. Strong indicates, was "running in two lines," and continued so to run. The Older Calvinism was represented by "Charles Hodge the father (1797-1878) and A. A. Hodge the son (1823-1886), together with Henry B. Smith (1815-1877), Robert J. Breckinridge (1800-1871), Samuel J. Baird, and William G. T. Shedd. All these, although with minor differences, held to views of human depravity and divine grace more nearly conformed to the doctrine of Augustine and Calvin, and are for this reason distinguished from the New England theologians and their followers by the popular title of Old School."

In contradistinction to the Older Calvinism we have the Newer Calvinism: "The Reformed system of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), modified successively by Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790), Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803), Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), Nathaniel Emmons (1745-1840), Leonard Woods (1774-1854), Charles G. Finney (1792-1875), Nathaniel W. Taylor (1786-1858), and Horace Bushnell (1802-1876). Calvinism, as thus modified, is often called the New England, or New School, of theology." The Rev. Dr. Frank Hugh Foster has defined this system as "the Calvinism of Westminster and Dort modified by a more ethical conception of God, by a new emphasis upon the liberty, ability, and responsibility of man, by the restriction of moral quality to action in distinction from nature, and by the theory that the constitutive principle of virtue is benevolence."

The Plan of Union adopted by the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in 1801 had drawn attention to the difference between these two types of theology. French infidelity was exerting its most powerful influence in America, all the more popular because France had but recently assisted the colonies in obtaining their independence. Many families, formerly pious, on moving into the new country left their religion behind them. The Sabbath was made a day not of worship, but of visiting, pleasure seeking and business. Ministers were scarce. In many communities not one was to be found. A materialistic interpretation of life prevailed. Spirituality was at a low ebb.

PLAN OF UNION

Such conditions presented a challenge to the few earnest Christian men and women who cared to accept it. The Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, though weak, undertook to supply the spiritual needs of the destitute people. In the summer of 1795, the Rev. Aliphalet Nott, a young Congregational minister, commissioned by the Connecticut Society, on his way to the "settlements," spent a night in the home of the Rev. John Blair Smith, President of Union College, at Schenectady, New York. Both men were of open mind. The two, face to face with a most serious condition, laid aside theories and undertook to devise means for conserving the evangelizing forces in the wilderness, entirely inadequate for the task before them.

This conversation was the beginning of a movement which resulted in the "Plan of Union," which became operative between the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in 1801. It was not an "organic" union, as some have supposed, but an "arrangement for advancing the gospel in the rapidly developing parts of the country." To this end as far as possible, a uniform system of church government was established between the two denominations. The "Plan" provided for the settlement of a Congregational minister over a Presbyterian church and of a Presbyterian minister over a Congregational church, with provisions for contingencies that might arise in the administration of discipline. Provision was also made for the government of churches composed of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

The "Plan" was a commendable effort to use the Christian forces at hand to the very best purpose in the evangelization of a needy people. Under the "Plan" many churches were formed in the new sections of the Northwest Territory then being settled. Each denomination entered into the "Plan" in an unselfish spirit, thinking more of the service to be rendered than of any denominational advantage to be gained. For reasons, not necessary to state here, the Presbyterian Church made greater gains by the "Plan" than the Congregational Church made.

PRESBYTERIANS DIVIDED

Unfortunately, however, grave differences growing out of the "Plan," arose in the Presbyterian Church. This was due partly to the form of ecclesiastical government already noted, and partly to theological differences between the Older and Newer Calvinism. The Presbyterian Church was divided into two camps—the Old School which held to the Older Calvinism and the New School which held to the Newer Calvanism. As the years passed and the New School party was increasing in numbers and influence, the friction between the two parties became more acute. The controversy began to take on a more definite form in 1834, when what is known as "The Western Memorial," "probably drawn up through the influence of Dr. Wilson," a long document, signed by eighteen ministers and ninety-nine elders, was presented to the General Assembly, asking that steps be taken to correct sundry grievances which were alleged by the memorialists to exist. The controversy then became much more pronounced until 1837, when the Old School party finding itself in the majority in the General Assembly summarily exscinded the Synods of Western Reserve, Utica, Geneva and Genesee, composed largely of New School men. This act cut off more than 500 churches and over 100,000 communicants. A year later the Old School and the New School party each became a legal entity claiming the name, "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," the name taken by the Church in 1789 on the constitution of the General Assembly. By and by leaders in each Church discovered the great mistake that had been made in the disruption, and efforts looking to a reunion were set in

motion, which resulted in a reunion, consummated in 1870. The reunion was effected "on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis" of the "common Standards" of the two Churches, with "an allowed latitude of interpretation of the Standards." Had this "allowed latitude of interpretation" of the Standards been agreed to in earlier days, the disruption never would have occurred.

After the reunion the Trustees of Lane adopted a plan to fill vacancies in the Board and Faculty as they might occur by the election of men from the Old School branch, until the two branches were equally represented, and then maintain this parity between the two branches as nearly as possible. However some of the Old School branch were a bit shy of this plan. The Rev. Dr. Henry Preserved Smith says that "some of the Trustees who had come in from the Old School branch wanted the central teaching of the Seminary to be such as they could approve without reserve."

Dr. Gillette states that The Lane Seminary was founded "after conference with the Professors at Princeton, and with Dr. Wilson at Cincinnati," and that "Dr. Wilson of Cincinnati, as well as the Professors at Princeton, were consulted in the matter" of Dr. Beecher's selection as the head of The Lane Seminary, and "gave expression of their satisfaction with the arrangement." Again, Dr. Gillette says that "Dr. Wilson was consulted in the matter, and is said to have been instrumental in inviting to the presidency of the Institution the man whom only a few months subsequently he prosecuted for heresy." After the first call to the presidency of Lane had been issued to Dr. Beecher, on October 22, 1830, Dr. Wilson, who formerly was enthusiastically in favor of Dr. Beecher, on December 13, 1831, resigned as President and member of the Board. On January 23, 1832, a second call to the presidency of Lane was given to Dr. Beecher, which he accepted. On the date of its issuance the secretary of the Board wrote a letter to Dr. Beecher, in which he said: "A desperate effort is making to ruin the Seminary and the Board in the estimation of the public. Your own character, too, has been assailed in the public papers of this city. Your theological opinions have been pronounced contrary to our Confession of Faith, and dangerous to the purity and peace of the Presbyterian Church." Etc.,

etc. An examination of the files of *The Standard* shows that Dr. Wilson not only published his resignation in *The Standard,* but also made an attack on Dr. Beecher and the Board. Dr. Wilson was an ardent Old School man. His attack on Dr. Beecher and the Board was made because of their New School leanings.

Dr. Beecher attributed Dr. Wilson's change of attitude to Princeton influence. "I suppose," said he, "the Princeton men had always *meant* to have one [seminary] at Cincinnati when they got ready; but now, when they found it was going to be a New School affair, they vowed it should never be. All their plans would be blown up, and a mighty power exerted against them. I heard what they said. Dr. Alexander, a noble good man, saw at once that their chance was lost as to taking the ground they had supposed reserved for them, and that it would be bringing forward a system different from theirs, viz., a Congregationalized Presbyterianism.

"So they wrote to Wilson a flattering letter, explaining the whole campaign, and predicting what the results would be, and attacking us as New England men, and sent a man out on purpose. I had it from Wilson's own mouth in the General Assembly that he had been accustomed to consult his particular friends at Princeton and in the Pittsburg Synod, and as it was their wish he should take back his invitation to me, he did so. . . . Well, Wilson turned square round."

WILSON AGAINST BEECHER

Dr. Wilson not only "turned square round," but began a violent assault on Dr. Beecher. When Dr. Beecher presented his credentials for membership in the Presbytery of Cincinnati, Dr. Wilson opposed his reception. Later he endeavored to induce the Presbytery to appoint a committee to examine Dr. Beecher's writings to see whether they were orthodox. The Presbytery declined to appoint such a committee, whereupon Dr. Wilson complained to the Synod, which held that the Presbytery could not be compelled to take such a course without a responsible prosecutor. He then took the matter to the Assembly, but his complaint did not meet with favor. Thus the only course left for Dr. Wilson was to prefer charges, which he did on November 11,

1834. These charges fill thirteen pages of the Presbytery's record book. He charged Dr. Beecher with *heresy, slander* and *hypocrisy*. The Presbytery acquitted Dr. Beecher by a vote of nearly two to one. Dr. Beecher says that when he went to the meeting of the Presbytery to answer the charges preferred against him, his wife was on her death bed and that "she did not live a fortnight after that." Having lost his case in the Presbytery Dr. Wilson appealed to the Synod. While a majority of the members of the Synod were in sympathy with the Old School, yet the Synod sustained the Presbytery by a large majority. The Synod requested Dr. Beecher to publish a statement setting forth his views.

Dr. Beecher responded to this request in the publication of a book, of 240 pages, entitled "Views in Theology." In the book he discussed natural ability, moral ability, original sin, total depravity and regeneration. He showed a remarkably wide grasp of the literature bearing on the subjects treated. In his introduction he said: "I avail myself of the earliest opportunity permitted by prior engagements, to comply with your request, 'that I would publish at as early a day as possible, a concise statement of the argument and design of my Sermon on Native Depravity, and of my views of total depravity, original sin, and regeneration, agreeably to my declaration and explanation before Synod.' I am cheered in this attempt by the consideration that the Synod 'saw nothing in my views, as explained by myself, to justify any suspicion of unsoundness in the faith,' and expressed their entire satisfaction with the terms of my acquiescence in their decision, and their belief that nothing insuperable remained to prevent my usefulness, or impair confidence in me, as a minister of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church." He closed his introduction as follows: "I cannot, however, forbear to remark, that the necessity of explanation imposed on me at this time of life by unfounded accusations, is not unlike calling on an aged merchant of long-established reputation, to prove his honesty, by the exhibition of his books; or a physician of age and experience, to repel the suspicion of quackery, by publishing an account of his cases and his practice. I am happy, however, to say, that it is not the fault of the Synod, that such a necessity exists, and that all

which I requested or hoped, was illustrated in the kind and candid manner in which the trial was conducted."

Dr. Wilson appealed from the Synod's decision to the General Assembly of 1836. The Assembly referred the appeal to its Judicial Committee. This Committee reported back to the Assembly that "the Rev. Dr. Joshua L. Wilson requested leave to withdraw his appeal in the case of the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher." His request "was granted." However, under the law, before the request could be granted it was necessary to secure Dr. Beecher's consent.

Dr. Beecher, in his autobiography, states that [when the report of the Committee came up for consideration in the Assembly] "Dr. Wilson rose and said he was prepared to prosecute the appeal, but that his friends had told him they could not sustain him [These friends had read Dr. Beecher's book on 'Views in Theology.'], and he was willing to withdraw" his appeal.

Dr. Samuel Miller, a Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, expressed the hope that Dr. Beecher would not object. Dr. Beecher says: "I arose and said meekly that I was ready for trial, but if Dr. Wilson wanted to cease [wanted to withdraw his appeal], I suppose that, according to the Book, after being dragged through all the church courts, I had a right to claim that my prosecutor ought to be treated as I should have been if condemned."

Continuing, Dr. Beecher states that "Dr. Wilson bounded from his seat and blazed out—he had no concessions or confessions to make. Others begged of me not to make difficulty; and such great flustration as they were in I never saw. I did not know the reason then, but I do now. You see, in my trial, I had taken the New School doctrines, and expounded and proved them under the Confession, and now, if the trial went on, those doctrines would be sustained by the General Assembly. The fact was, that in the discussion between New Haven and Princeton, conducted in the Christian Spectator and Repatory, New Haven had pushed them so, and they had made such concessions and distinctions, that some of my strongest testimonies were drawn from their own documents. Now this would make trouble among

themselves. Many of the Old School would be scandalized to find Princeton had been on New School ground, and to have New School doctrine sustained by the General Assembly through their aid. Well, I never knew how much they were troubled about that till afterward. So, after enjoying their consternation for a moment or two, I said I would make no objection, and the thing [Dr. Wilson's appeal, at his own request, Dr. Beecher concurring] was dropped."

Later a strange story, mentioned by Dr. Gillette, was circulated, according to which "some rogue" had stolen Dr. Wilson's papers bearing on his appeal, and that for this reason he requested leave to withdraw his appeal. This story, however, does not agree with Dr. Beecher's version, published in his autobiography. Here it is recorded that "Dr. Wilson rose [in the Assembly when the report of the Committee came up for consideration] and said he was prepared to prosecute the appeal [so it appears that he had 'papers' necessary for the prosecution, regardless of what 'some rogue' may have purloined], but his friends had told him they could not sustain him, and he was willing to withdraw" his appeal. Dr. Beecher's book on "Views in Theology" had made many friends for him, and thus defeated Dr. Wilson in his appeal before the Assembly without a hearing of the case.

The Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes was put on trial for heresy by the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia. He was acquitted by the General Assembly in 1836, the same Assembly (a few days later) before which Dr. Wilson had lost his appeal. Several other ministers were brought to trial on the charge of heresy, among them Edward Beecher, J. M. Sturdevent, William Kirby and George Duffield. These heresy charges, especially those against Drs. Beecher and Barnes, hastened the disruption in 1837.

When the final separation of the Church into the two legal entities occurred, the theological seminaries lined up as follows: Old School—Princeton, Western, Danville, now merged with Louisville, Northwest (now Chicago), Union in Richmond, and Columbia; New School—Auburn, Lane, and Union in New York.

ANTI-SLAVERY IMBROGLIO

Theodore D. Weld was responsible for the "Anti-Slavery Imbroglio," as Dr. Beecher termed the abolition movement among the students. Mr. Weld matriculated in 1833. He was a magnetic speaker, opinionated and a born leader. Dr. Beecher observed that he "was a genius, first-rate natural capacity, but uneducated. . . . He took the lead of the whole Institution. The young men had, many of them, been under his care, and they thought he was a god." Of the group of students led by Mr. Weld, Dr. Beecher says, "it was a noble class of young men, uncommonly strong, a little uncivilized, entirely radical, and terribly in earnest."

The "abolition society," under the leadership of Mr. Weld, became so active, not to use a stronger term, that the Seminary was threatened with mob violence, and probably escaped only because of the distance from Cincinnati, and the bad road connecting the Seminary with the city. The Board felt constrained to take action to restrain the society. Whether the action was wise or not, Mr. Weld was displeased with it and, in 1834, led an exodus of a majority of the students, who went to Oberlin, resulting in the organization of the Oberlin Theological Seminary. The exodus, of course, hurt Lane. Dr. Beecher found some consolation in the fact that while he had come West to organize one theological seminary, his coming had resulted in the organization of two.

KEMPER HEIRS

To the Old School General Assembly in 1842, a commissioner from the Presbytery of Cincinnati, the Rev. David K. McDonald, pastor of the Hopewell and Somerset churches, "presented documents in relation to Lane Seminary, and the lands deeded by Elnathan Kemper, and others, to that Seminary, which he had been requested by the heirs of Kemper to offer to this house, in order that the Assembly might inquire whether the intention of the donors had been carried out in the appointment of professors for that Institution; and solely with the view of securing the use of the property for the particular purposes for which

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it was given." After due consideration the Assembly "resolved that the whole subject be indefinitely postponed. Yeas 65, Nays 52." "Certain memorials and papers respecting The Lane Seminary; with a resolution, that it is inexpedient for the Assembly to take any measures for the purpose of commencing legal process, in relation to Lane Seminary;—which was put on the Docket," were brought before the Assembly of 1843 by overture. To this overture the Assembly replied "that it is inexpedient for the Assembly to take any measures for the purpose of commencing a legal process in relation to Lane Seminary."

The Assembly of 1842 "indefinitely postponed" action on the "documents in relation to Lane Seminary" by a vote of 65 to 52. When the matter was brought before the Assembly in 1843, the Assembly by a unanimous vote answered in the negative. But the Kemper heirs were not willing to abide by the action of the Assembly, as will be seen in the following pages.

LITIGATION OVER LANE

Lane was a prize worth contending for. A majority of the Trustees and of the Faculty were in sympathy with the New School side during the period of the controversy, and cast their lot with the New School when it became a legal entity. Not being able to take over the Seminary through the ecclesiastical courts, the Old School leaders appealed to the civil courts. The brief sketch of these suits here given is based on the records of the Supreme Court of Ohio.

At the December Term, 1846, the case of David Kemper *v.* Lyman Beecher was heard. It was the purpose of Mr. Kemper to have Dr. Beecher ousted from his Seminary position. He "charges that Lyman Beecher, who is not a member of the Presbyterian Church, in good standing, under the care of the General Assembly of the Church, in the United States of America, on May 1, 1845, usurped and still does usurp and intrude into the office of Professor of Theology in Lane Seminary, without any legal appointment or qualification, and without due warrant of law, has and does exercise the office of Professor of Theology in said Seminary." Dr. Beecher made reply which satisfied the

Court as to the legality of his entrance upon his seminary position, but the Court held that he must also show that he had a right to the position at the present time, and gave him "leave to amend his answer."

This brought the case of ouster before the December Term, 1847. This case is known as "The State of Ohio, on Relation of David Kemper *v.* Lyman Beecher. The Same *v.* Calvin E. Stowe. The Same *v.* D. H. Allen." Substantially the same charge is alleged against all three of these Professors as had been alleged against Dr. Beecher the previous year, except that the date fixed when it was alleged that Dr. Beecher had usurped his office, was given as May 11, 1835, instead of May 1, 1845. The opinion of the Court was rendered by Chief Justice Birchard. Among other things the Court said: "These defendants have, since the unfortunate separation, caused by the exscinding resolution of the General Assembly, adhered to that division of the Church known as the New School Assembly. They are among the most valued public teachers, both by precept and example; and if it be true that to thus belong to that body, disqualifies them for the Professorships which they respectively fill, the cause of disqualification occurred more than three years prior to the commencement of these proceedings. . . . We cannot hesitate in coming to the conclusion that the right to proceed *quo warranto,* is denied after the lapse of three years from the time the right to prosecute first existed. . . . Judgment for the defendants."

In his autobiography Dr. Beecher comments on this suit as follows: "It was a vexatious suit, and vexatious enough they found it. A very large sum of money was spent in trying to turn the Faculty out of office; but the fact is, we outwinded them. We served them just as they ought to be served." Unfortunately the Old School representatives were not satisfied with the ending of this suit and filed another.

Having failed to oust the Professors through *quo warranto* proceedings, the attack was continued from another angle, that of *chancery*. At the December Term, 1848, the case of "David R. Kemper *vs.* The Trustees of Lane Seminary and Others" was heard and adjudicated. The Bill of Mr. Kemper affirmed that

the "Trustees have altogether neglected to discharge their trust according to the charter, and as in equity they ought to have done, but on the contrary are now, and have been for years, employing as Professors, said Beecher, Stowe and Allen, neither of whom are or have been for several years, members of the Presbyterian Church, etc., if they ever were members it has been of some society which has withdrawn from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and thereby ceased to be members of said Church in good standing.

"The Bill charges further that said Trustees have refused to keep in the Executive Committee, a majority of members of said Presbyterian Church under the care of the General Assembly of the United States, but on the contrary said Committee is composed of Nathaniel Wright and six others, who are not members of said Presbyterian Church in good standing, and that therefore said Trustees have permitted improper persons to act as Professors and in the Executive Committee. That said Trustees have refused to establish regulations requiring manual labor, or if they have established such regulations, complainant is informed, and believes they are not enforced. That said Trustees, by disregarding their duties, are bringing said Institution into disrepute, wasting its funds, and making it a place in the opinion of complainant and others belonging to said Presbyterian Church, etc., unfit for the education of youths anxious to become ministers of said Church. All whereof, the Bill charges, is contrary to equity."

Chief Justice Birchard in rendering the opinion of the Court said: "The deed expressly grants away the entire estate and 'covenants that in no case shall any part of the property or its avails ever revert to the grantors their heirs or assigns,' but in case the Lane Seminary shall ever fail or become extinct shall go to certain religious or benevolent societies. No right remains in Kemper under this deed. The property from him passed to a public institution as a gift to the public, for the benefit of the public, and he can claim no right to interfere beyond that of any other member of the community. . . . It has been claimed that a visitatorial power existed in Kemper as founder, which enable him to supervise the execution of the trust and maintain

a bill to correct abuses. But the case shows no such founding of the Seminary, as entitles him to the exercise of visitatorial powers. He was but one of several donors, and the donation was to incorporated Trustees. This vested the visitatorial power of all the donors in those Trustees, subject to the control of a Court of Chancery for any abuse of the trust." The Court held "that the donors cannot maintain a Bill in Chancery for the purpose of inquiring into the manner in which Trustees discharge their duties, and to control them in the appointment of Professors."

OLD SCHOOL SEMINARY

Having failed to get control of the Seminary through either ecclesiastical or civil law, the Old School leaders undertook to establish a Seminary of their own in Cincinnati. But some one may ask "why did they not send their candidates to Lane, since Lane admitted students of other Churches?" The Old School leaders may answer this question for themselves.

In the Bill mentioned above it was charged that The Lane Seminary was "unfit for the education of youths anxious to become ministers" in the Old School Church. This impression was a long time in dying out. The Rev. Dr. John N. Ervin, who was graduated from Lane in 1879, sixty-two years ago, and was settled over his present charge in Dayton, Ky., immediately afterward, relates an experience he had when he came up for examination for ordination. A good old elder whose memory had not failed him requested members of the Presbytery to give careful heed to the answers, given by the candidate, reminding them that he was educated at Lane.

George Beecher, a son of Dr. Lyman Beecher was received into the Presbytery of Cincinnati as a licentiate. In September 1833, he passed a rigid examination for ordination. The Rev. Dr. Joshua L. Wilson opposed the ordination in a speech of thirty minutes. In closing he said he "believed that the candidate was not a Christian, and knew nothing experimentally about Christianity, and that he firmly believed that he and all those who held the same sentiments with him, would never see

the gates of eternal bliss." He then joined in a minority vote against the ordination.

We have noted the bitter opposition, on different occasions, of Dr. Wilson against Dr. Beecher. How did Dr. Beecher react to this opposition? At a meeting of the Lane Club, held on December 13, 1881, the Rev. John M. Bishop, of the Class of 1844, made a statement as follows: "It is proper for me here and now to say that no student of Lane, as we sat at the feet of Dr. Beecher ever head him speak disrespectfully or unkindly of Dr. Wilson. . . . [He said] There is no personal bitterness between us."

On April 2, 1850, the Rev. Martin Schaad requested a letter of dismission from the Old School Presbytery of Cincinnati to the New School Presbytery, whereupon a resolution was introduced, reading as follows: "Resolved—that in view of the relation existing between this Presbytery and the body to which he asks a dismissal we cannot grant his request." The resolution was so amended that he be granted a "certificate of standing." A yea and nay vote was demanded and it was carried by only a small majority. Such facts as these, almost unbelievable today, answer the question why the Old School leaders would not patronize The Lane Seminary, preferring to establish an institution of their own.

The Rev. Lucien V. Rule, in the "Forerunners of Lincoln in the Ohio Valley," says that the Central Church in Cincinnati, a swarm from the First Church, was organized in 1844, "primarily to bring the Rev. Dr. N. L. Rice [noted for his debate with Alexander Campbell] to Cincinnati as pastor and to strengthen the Old School side."

The Old School Presbytery of Cincinnati, in April 1850, adopted an overture to their General Assembly, meeting in Cincinnati, looking to the establishment of a Seminary in Cincinnati. Might not the Western and New Albany Seminaries be consolidated and located in Cincinnati? If this cannot be done the Assembly was urged to take measures to establish a new Seminary in Cincinnati. If neither of these suggestions could be met, then the Presbytery "in view of existing circumstances, deem

it wise to unite with other Presbyteries in the West entertaining similar views in establishing a Theological Seminary in the city of Cincinnati." Dr. Rice was a commissioner from the Presbytery of Cincinnati to the Assembly the following month. The presence of Dr. Rice indicates that the overture was duly pressed. The Assembly answered that "it does not see its way clear, at the present time, to express any opinion in regard to the existing and contemplated Theological Seminaries west of the Allegheny."

But the Cincinnati Old School leaders were determined on a Seminary of their own. In the Centennial History of Cincinnati a statement is made as follows: "Another institution of temporary life was the Cincinnati Theological Seminary, Old School Presbyterian, which was started in May, 1850, by the opponents of Lane Theological Seminary. Its instructors were made up of various pastors throughout the city, who taught twelve students in their church lecture rooms. The Faculty included Revs. James Hoge and L. N. Rice." In a publication by Charles Cist this institution is listed in the years 1850 and 1851. It is not clear as to when it was closed; but as Dr. Rice accepted a call to the Second Church in St. Louis in 1853, and as he seems to have been the leader in founding the institution, it is not likely that it continued long after his departure.

RESULTS

The Lane Seminary was established for the purpose of preparing men in the West to preach the gospel in the West. In the early history of the Institution, the Rev. J. C. White, of the Class of 1843, states that "there was not a town within seventy-five miles of Cincinnati where good work was not done by the Lane Faculty and students. It was an era of gospel missions, abolition and temperance." The Seminary and its distinguished President passed through exasperating experiences during the eighteen years (1832-50) of his administration. In these years 356 students were matriculated, taking at least a part of the course, and 158 were graduated. Lane men accomplished a lasting service in the West, as Presbyterian churches and schools

testify. Before 1843 nine men went as foreign missionaries and others later.

LANE'S THEOLOGICAL POSITION

The foregoing statement of facts prepares us to appreciate the clear and able statement of the Rev. Dr. E. D. Morris, so long connected with Lane's Faculty, on Lane's theological position in the Presbyterian family of Churches.

After a discussion of Presbyterianism in general and American Presbyterianism in particular, he says: "On this general basis, our Church is committed for the future to the widest liberty of thought consistent with denominational integrity, and to the cordial recognition of every true advance which free thought, under the guidance of the Spirit, may be led to make. We are not held movelessly, as if it were a spell, by the Calvinism of Calvin, or the Calvinism of the Turretins, or the Calvinism of the Synod of Dorth, or the Calvinism of Scotland, either past or present. We hold our Calvinism as Americans; counting ourselves at liberty to admit into it any modifying or improving influence that may flow from American life, and at liberty also to express it as we hold it, not in imported, but in American terms. In common with all true Presbyterians in all times, we place the Bible above our standards, and regard ourselves as bound first of all to study the Divine Word for ourselves, and then to believe what it teaches, just as God gives us grace to apprehend it. And if, in his great love and under the impress of the amazing influences affecting us in such a land and age as ours, we are permitted to see the truth at any point more clearly and more comprehensively than our fathers in Britain or in Holland saw it two or three centuries ago, I trust that we have courage enough as a Church to welcome such revelations, and fidelity enough to the common Calvinism to express them. I am no advocate of loose thinking or loose language, in the sphere of belief: a Christian creed, born of the thought and struggle of centuries, is to me one of the most sacred things on earth. I am no friend of that reckless temper which would tear down the old before discovering any worthier substitute; there

is a fancied progress which is downward toward iconoclasm in faith, and toward an ultimate extinction of faith. But while avoiding this hazardous extreme, we may still believe in healthful progress in theological opinion within our Church, and may look happily forward to advance upon advance in Calvinistic thought in our communion, even from century to century. Such, at least, is my personal hope and my constant expectation and prayer."

Dr. Morris wrote these words twenty years before the revision of the Confession of Faith in 1903. They are the words of a prophet as well as those of an able teacher and a clear-headed theologian. They represent the liberal spirit of Calvinism in which Lane was founded.